

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## GENERAL MEETINGS FOR SCIENTIFIC BUSINESS

OF THE

## ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

(January to April, 1908.)

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January 14, 1908.

Prof. J. ROSE BRADFORD, F.R.S., Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Secretary read the following report on the additions made to the Society's Menagerie during the month of December 1907:—

The number of registered additions to the Society's Menagerie during the month of December was 175. Of these 89 were acquired by presentation and 4 by purchase, 50 were received on deposit, 1 by exchange, and 31 were bred in the Gardens. The number of departures during the same period, by death and removals, was 174.

Amongst the additions special attention may be directed to:—

One Hainan Gibbon (*Hylobates hainanus*), ♂, from Hainan, presented by R. Douglas, Esq., on December 6th.

One Grévy's Zebra (*Equus grevyi*), ♂, from Abyssinia, received in exchange on December 9th.

One Ethiopian Aard Vark (*Orycteropus aethiopicus*) from Nainasha, British East Africa, presented by the Marquess Gandolfi Hornyold on December 17th.

One Macqueen's Bustard (*Houbara macqueeni*), caught in the Red Sea, presented by Mr. Jos. Vyskoceel on December 9th.

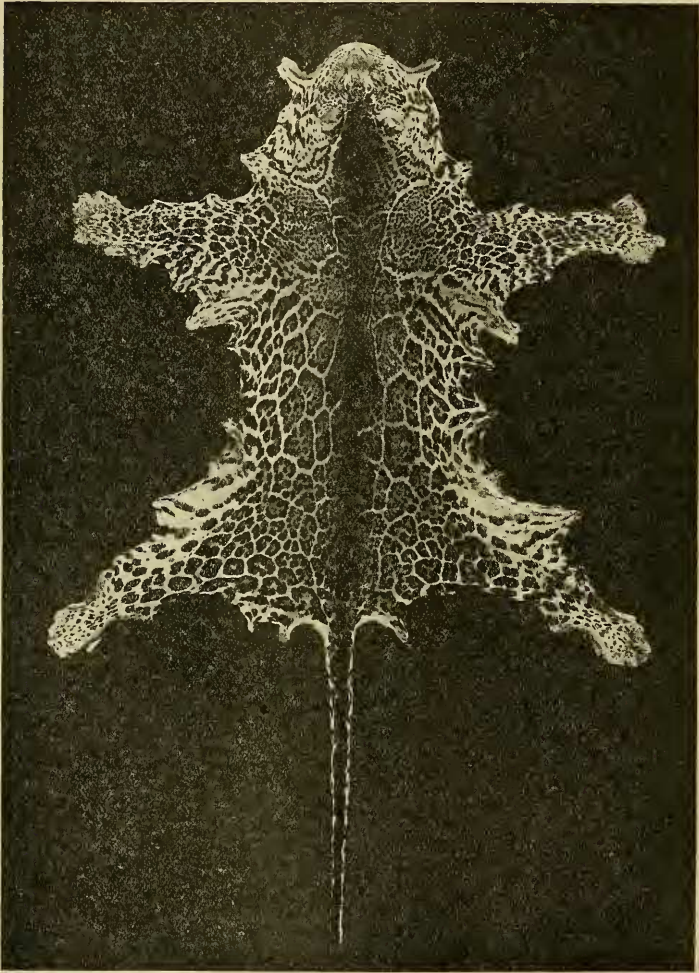
Two Royal Pythons (*Python regius*) and one Nose-horned Puff-Adder (*Bitis nasicornis*), from S. Nigeria, presented by R. B. Brooks, Esq., on December 20th.

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On behalf of Mr. Lydekker, an abnormally marked Leopard-skin from the Deccan, India, was exhibited by Mr. Pycraft. The specimen would shortly be presented to the British Museum by

Mr. F. A. Coleridge, who shot the animal from which it was taken near Putnam, Cuddapah, in December 1906. The following

Text-fig. 1.



Abnormally marked Leopard-skin from the Deccan.

notes on the specimen (of which a photograph is here given) were supplied by Mr. Lydekker:—

According to information supplied by the donor, leopards of the ordinary type abound in the district where the abnormally

marked specimen was killed. In the pattern of the markings this skin appears to be altogether unique. The most striking feature is a kind of network of broad yellow lines commencing on the head in a large, somewhat diamond-shaped area and continued all down the back in meshes of smaller size. Within each mesh is a large black-bordered patch, containing a central area darker than the big network, upon which is a variable number of black spots. In many instances the borders of the patches are incomplete. The other details of the pattern are sufficiently apparent in the photograph. Beyond referring to the fact that the markings, so far as they resemble those of any normally coloured animal, make a slight, although decided, approximation to the Jaguar-type, I am unable to offer any explanation of the remarkable style of ornamentation presented by this extremely handsome skin.

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The following papers were read :—

1. Description of a Biological Expedition to the Birket-el-Qurun, Fayûm Province of Egypt. By W. A. CUNNINGTON, B.A., Ph.D., F.Z.S.

[Received January 14, 1908.]

An expedition was undertaken by me in conjunction with Mr. C. L. Boulenger, to investigate the flora and fauna of the Birket-el-Qurun, a lake in the Fayûm province of Egypt—the Lake Moeris of the ancients. The expedition left London in the middle of March 1907, and eight weeks were spent in collecting on the shores of the lake. Since the railway comes within some seven miles, there were no difficulties of transport to contend with, the journeying about the lake being accomplished in a sailing-boat of moderate size.

The Birket-el-Qurun, or lake of the horns, is still of considerable dimensions, being about 25 miles long, and having a maximum breadth of 5 or 6 miles. It is, however, only a remnant of the historic Lake Moeris, which was many times greater, and was used as an artificial regulator of the Nile floods by the monarchs of the XIIth dynasty. The lake still communicates with the Nile by means of the Bahr Yusef, a channel over 200 miles long, which diverges from the river a short distance north of Assint. The inflow and outflow of water was originally controlled by means of lock-gates, but since these were allowed to fall into disuse, more and more of the extremely fertile land was reclaimed, until the lake was reduced to its modern dimensions. It is believed that the surface of the lake was at one time some 70 feet above the level of the Mediterranean ; at the present day, it is approximately 140 feet below sea-level.

In addition to the historical evidence, there are not wanting